

REMARKS

Claims 1-15 and 17-19 are pending in this application. The Office Action rejects claims 12-15 and 17-19 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a), and holds claims 1-11 as withdrawn from consideration. Applicant has amended claim 12 in order to obviate this rejection.

As agreed to in the personal interview conducted with Examiner Mike Qi on December 6, 2006, claim 12 has been amended to recite "further curing the cured liquid crystal layer comprises applying second radiation to fully cure the *semi-cured and uncured portions* of the *previously* cured liquid crystal layer." The cited references nowhere teach or suggest the application of second radiation to these portions of previously cured material. Accordingly, and for the reasons cited below, instant claim 12 is patentable over the cited references. Applicant's further separate record of the substance of the interview is contained in the following remarks.

I. Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

The Office Action rejects claims 12, 14 and 18 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Abileah et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,818,615; hereafter "Abileah") in view of Molsen (U.S. Patent No. 6,573,959; hereafter "Molsen") and in further view of Gunning, III (U.S. Patent No. 5,926,24; hereafter "Gunning"). The Office Action asserts that Abileah teaches all the claimed features except for "bringing the cured liquid crystal layer into contact with an organic solvent to develop uncured component of the liquid crystal and further curing the cured liquid crystal layer into contact with the organic solvent," which is taught by Molsen, and that the combination of Molsen and Abileah teach all the claimed features except for "further curing the cured liquid crystal layer into contact with the organic solvent," which is taught by Gunning. It would thus have allegedly been obvious to modify the retardation element fabrication process as taught by Abileah and Molsen by Gunning's teachings of applying radiation in order to better cure the material. Applicant hereby amends claim 12 and respectfully traverses the rejection.

Claim 12, as amended, more fully clarifies that "further curing the cured liquid crystal layer comprises applying a second radiation to fully cure the semicured and uncured portions of the previously cured liquid crystal layer." These features are clearly not taught by any combination of the cited references, Gunning in particular. Gunning recites polymerization of thin film material by UV radiation through an aperture mask whereby polymerizable liquid crystal material is partitioned into two types of regions: polymerized and unpolymerized. In this phase, only the polymerized material has been exposed to UV radiation. The second step in Gunning involves removal of the aperture mask and heating the unpolymerized regions of the thin film and making them substantially isotropic. Gunning's final step involves exposing the isotropic or unpolymerized regions of the thin film to UV radiation so as to polymerize them.

In contrast, the instant claims are clearly directed toward first curing a liquid crystal layer through the application of radiation, and further curing the same portion of the liquid crystal layer subsequent to contact with organic solvent. In this final step of further curing, the liquid crystal layer, which was originally cured, is again exposed to radiation in order to fully cure any uncured or semicured portions therein. This feature is nowhere taught or suggested in any of the claimed references particularly Gunning.

For at least these reasons, Abileah in view of Molsen and further in view of Gunning would not have rendered obvious the claimed invention. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

II. Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

The Office Action Rejects claims 13, 15, 17 and 19 under Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Abileah in view of Molsen and in further view of Gunning, as applied above, and further in view of Kazuhara et al. (US 2002/0041352; hereafter ("Kazuhara")). Applicant hereby amends claim 12 and respectfully traverses the rejection.

This rejection is predicated upon a proper rejection of the claimed invention over Abileah in view of Molsen and in further view of Gunning. For the reasons cited above, the references would not have rendered obvious the claimed invention. Kazuhara is cited for its disclosure of radiating rays in nitrogen to reduce reaction time for hardening; however, Kazuhara does not overcome the deficiencies of the other references, as disclosed above. Accordingly, dependent claims 13, 15, 17 and 19 are patentable over Abileah in view of Molsen and in further view of Gunning, as applied above, and further in view of Kazuhara.

For at least these reasons, Abileah in view of Molsen, further in view of Gunning and Kazuhara would not have been rendered obvious the claimed invention. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

III. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-20 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



James A. Oliff
Registration No. 27,075

Ryan C. Cady
Registration No. 56,762

JAO:RCC/amw

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OLIFF & BERRIDGE, PLC
P.O. Box 19928
Alexandria, Virginia 22320
Telephone: (703) 836-6400

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